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ABSTRACT

In recent years, there has been an urgency to develop new effective teaching strategies that will enhance literacy instruction in the classroom. Due to the varied range of learning styles in the classroom, a multi-faceted teaching style is warranted to ensure the academic success of all students. Integrating music into daily instruction provides teachers with opportunities to meet the needs of students of diverse backgrounds. Effective integration of music, movement, and literacy creates an environment that develops literacy skills, fosters creative expression, increases cultural awareness, and enhances memorization and comprehension skills. This paper provides an overview of musical development stages, cites reasons to use music to enhance literacy instruction, outlines how to nurture early literacy development, and lists eight activities in music for students and teachers to carry out. Contains 4 references. (NKA)

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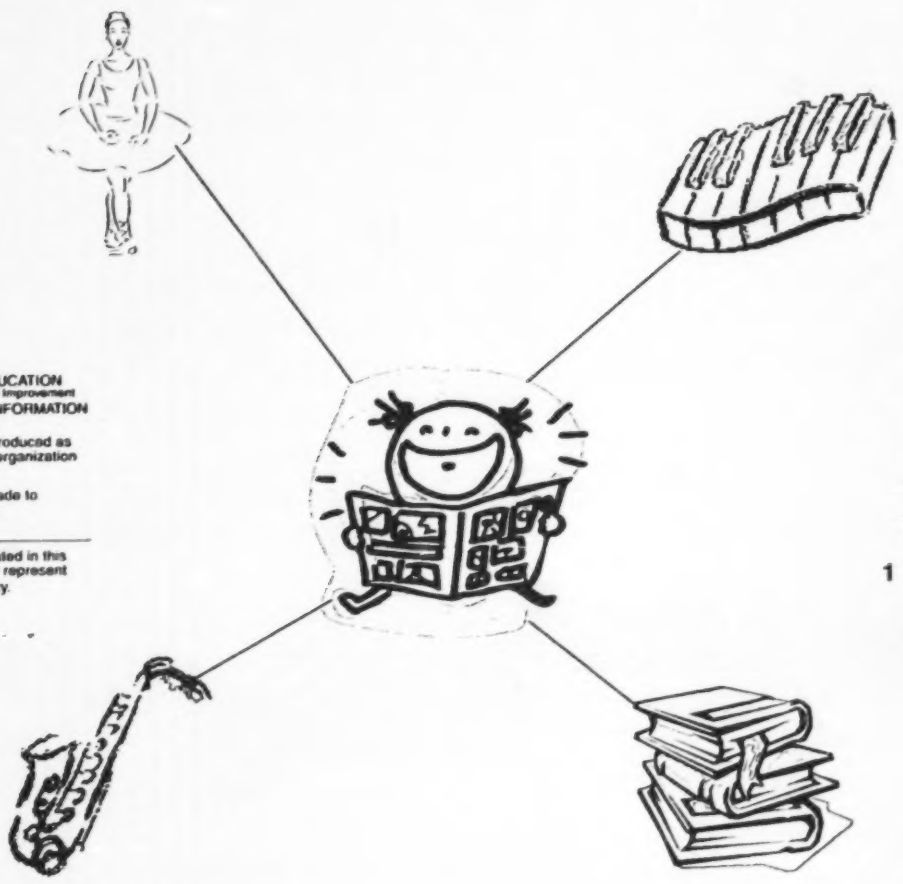
Locomotion and Literacy: Effective Strategies to Enhance Literacy Instruction



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In recent years, there has been an urgency to develop new, effective teaching strategies that will enhance literacy instruction in the classroom. Due to the varied range of learning styles in the classroom, a multi-faceted teaching style is warranted to ensure the academic success of all students. Integrating music into daily instruction provides teachers with opportunities to meet the needs of students of diverse backgrounds. Effective integration of music, movement and literacy creates an environment that develops literacy skills, fosters creative expression, increases cultural awareness and enhances memorization and comprehension skills.

Overview of Musical Development Stages

- ***Birth to 4 months***
  Awareness of music starts immediately; Crying is a baby's first "musical" sound.

- ***6 to 18 months***
  Babbling increases, taking on more pronounced musical characteristics.

- ***1½ to 3 Years***
  Real Singing Begins; Dance (Movement) Begins.

- ***3½ to 4 Years***
  Accuracy in matching simple tunes begins; Self-expressions through music increases.

- ***4 to 5 Years***
  Singing accuracy increases; Ability to discuss musical experiences expands.

- ***5 Years and Over***
  Song repertoire expands, recognition and appreciation increases; Coordinated dance begins.

Why use Music to Enhance Literacy Instruction?

(Cornett, 2003; Bayless & Ramsey, 1991)

- According to Gardner (1993), the musical intelligence is the earliest intelligence to emerge.
- Music supports students' struggle with literacy development.
- Music helps to improve students' comprehension and recall of expository material.
- Music is an important part of life.
- Music can help to improve attention span and memory and can enhance vocabulary acquisition.
- Music can enhance learning across the curriculum.
- Music can increase creativity and cultural awareness and bonds people together.

Nurturing Early Literacy Development

- Read to and with children daily.
- Model the love of reading and writing.
- Establish a "print-rich" environment.
- Establish a home-school partnership.
- Accept students' approximations.
- Do not negate the child's native anguage/vernacular.
- "Do not mistake language differences with language deficits among culturally diverse students." (Vacca &Vacca, 2002)

Activities

- **Echo read lyrics of popular children's songs or radio songs.**
- **Take a field trip to a concert, opera, or ballet.**
- **Have a "Celebrate Me and My Music Day" (Have students to bring in their favorite recordings, play the recordings and engage them in an integrated music and literacy activity.)**
- **Invite musical guests and experts to speak to students.**
- **Using the Language Experience Approach, help students create a class song.**
- **Create Song illustrations (Have students listen to a musical selection and draw a picture that represents the song.)**
- **Have a "Let's Dance to that Tune" Day (Play and research different genres of music and assign groups to create dance routines that represent interpretation of the music.)**
- **Have students complete "This tune makes me feel..." activity (Have students listen to a musical selection and write a narrative that represents the song.)**

References

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